

## **D.A.R.E. TRAINING PROGRAM EVALUATION**

### **PROGRAM CONSULTING ASSOCIATES**

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*This evaluation was conducted by Program Consulting Associates under a contract with the Rhode Island Governor's Justice Commission.*

### Acknowledgments

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## **Purpose of Evaluation:**

The primary purpose of this evaluation was to assess the statewide scope of the Rhode Island D.A.R.E. training program and the extent to which trainees apply their new skills following training. The training program was assessed for the 3-year period, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, and 1997-1998. Three evaluation questions were developed for the evaluation process:

1. *What is the scope of the program statewide?*
  - What schools receive D.A.R.E. services?
  - Which curricula are being taught at what level?
  - How many students within each age group receive D.A.R.E. services?
2. *What is the scope and impact of the training of D.A.R.E. officers?*
  - Where are the officers trained?
  - What skills are taught?
  - How are these skills taught in the schools?
  - How many classes are taught following the training?
  - What is the status of officers trained in the past three years?
  - What is the turnover of trainees?
  - Why did officers remain in or leave D.A.R.E.?
3. *What is the cost of D.A.R.E. services?*
  - What is the cost per trainee?
  - How do costs vary by training site?

Additionally, the evaluation sought to gain insights into the effectiveness of the D.A.R.E. training from the perspective of parents and educators who had involvement in the program. Although this was not the major thrust of the evaluation, parent and teacher interviews provided important insights into the effect of the program on children and families.

## **Methodology:**

Prior to conducting this evaluation, the evaluators met with key staff from the Rhode Island Governor's Justice Commission to develop and finalize the evaluation questions. All relevant D.A.R.E. curricular material, training records and annual and financial reports were reviewed. As an initial step in the evaluation process, an in-depth meeting was held with Officer William Fitzgerald, President of the RI D.A.R.E. Officers' Association and Officer Syd Wordell, Vice President of the D.A.R.E. Officers' Association at that time. D.A.R.E. data were reviewed, and

recruitment, training, and support policies and procedures discussed. Officer Fitzgerald served as an invaluable liaison and resource throughout the entire evaluation process.

The three primary evaluation questions discussed above were addressed utilizing two approaches: 1) structured telephone interviews were held with 22 officers who participated in the D.A.R.E. training from 1995-1998; and 2) a Training Report Table and a Program Output Table were constructed to present and summarize data.

The structured interviews were conducted by telephone and lasted approximately 15-20 minutes. The initial approach for the telephone interviews was to generate a random sample of 25 officers from the list of 67 officers trained within the three-year time frame of the study. However, due to the difficulty in contacting officers available for interviewing, it was decided during the interview process to contact every third officer on the full list. When this approach failed to generate enough responses, almost every officer on the list was contacted in order to complete the 22 interviews included in this evaluation report.

A Training Report Table was constructed for each of the three years of the study. Information in this table includes: rank and affiliation of trainee; training site; the number of schools served; the number of children served; the grades served, the cost of training, the officer's current status in D.A.R.E., and the reason for leaving, if applicable. Data from this table were used to construct the Program Output Table, which includes a 3-year comparative analysis of the numbers of D.A.R.E. trainees, geographic distribution of trainees, number of students served, frequency of grades served, frequency of skills learned, and percentage of active and inactive officers. SPSS was used to analyze these data.

The 4 parents and 3 teachers who participated in telephone interviews were identified with the assistance of Officer Fitzgerald and through the evaluator's personal community contacts. The structured phone interviews focused on the same D.A.R.E. teaching responsibilities and personal and social skill areas that were the focus of the officers' interviews.

### **Overview of D.A.R.E Training Program**

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (D.A.R.E.) is a national initiative which focuses on preventing and reducing drug abuse and violence in children and youth. Local law enforcement officers, educators, parents, and the community work collaboratively to teach children and youth strategies to resist the pressures which may lead to alcohol, marijuana, or other drug use or to engage in violence.

D.A.R.E. America nationally coordinates the D.A.R.E. curriculum with input from state and local agencies and communities. Trainings in the established curricula are held periodically throughout the country. The program is divided into several different components:

K-4<sup>th</sup> grade visitations: class visitations by police officers, which focus on child safety and prevention issues;

5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Core curriculum: a seventeen-lesson curriculum that is the foundation of the D.A.R.E. program;

Middle/Junior High curriculum: a 10 lesson follow-up to the Core curriculum, reinforcing values taught in the elementary grades and teaching skills to resist peer pressure;

Senior High curriculum: nine lessons reinforcing earlier skills with a focus on drug abuse and its effect on the community;

D.A.R.E. + P.L.U.S. (Play & learn Under Supervision): an after school program for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders designed to help them stay involved in school and away from gangs, drugs, and violence;

Parent Program: six two-hour sessions for adults conducted by a police officer, that focus on

enhancing comprehensive family support and involvement in the community. The sessions include information on drug use, building self-esteem, childhood risk factors and prevention factors, conflict resolution, and community agency networking.

The law enforcement officers participating in this evaluation of the RI D.A.R.E. program attended training in the Core, Middle/Junior High, Senior High, and Parenting curricula.

## **INTERVIEWS WITH D.A.R.E. OFFICERS**

### **Background of D.A.R.E. Officers**

Twenty-two former and current D.A.R.E. officers were interviewed. The average age of the respondents was 36 years. The respondents were mostly Caucasian (90.9%). Two of the respondents identified themselves as Latino/Hispanic. Most (91.9%) of the respondents completed some education beyond high school – 45.5% some college; 31.8% college graduates; 13.6% with some graduate education. 72.7% were married; 18.2% separated or divorced. Almost all (90.0%) were themselves parents. More than half (54.5%) were active in other community service activities outside of their work and D.A.R.E. duties.

The average years spent as a police officer was 10, and the average years working in the town in which they performed their D.A.R.E. duties was 9.5 years. Fifteen of the officers (68.2%) were active in D.A.R.E. at the time of the interview. The rest were inactive. Four of the officers (18.2%) began their D.A.R.E. work before 1995. The rest of the officers' starting years were distributed as follows: 1995 – 6 officers; 1996 – 6 officers; 1997 – 4 officers; 1998 – 2 officers. This evaluation focuses upon the training and duties performed during the 1995-1998 period.

### **Becoming a D.A.R.E. Officer**

The curricula in which the officers were primarily trained was the Core/Elementary (81.8%) The remaining officers were first trained in the in the Middle/Junior High School. Ten of the officers trained in Core were subsequently trained in Middle/Junior High School. Nine of the officers had no secondary training. The remaining three were trained in the High School (2) or the Parent (2) curricula. These officers had little or no opportunity to teach these curricula. The focus of this evaluation will be on the Core/Elementary and Middle/Junior High School curricula and training. Seventeen (77%) of the officers volunteered for D.A.R.E. duty. Two officers said it was a part of their community-policing job. One officer described D.A.R.E. duty as involuntary. However, this officer had a change of heart about D.A.R.E. and enthusiastically remains active in the program. Seventeen of the officers were able to describe what attracted them to D.A.R.E. The most frequent answer (47%) was that they wished to work with kids and in the schools. Others (30%) felt it was an important component of community policing. Two of the officers felt it would be a challenge or wanted to take some lessons from their personal past and teach young people how to deal with them. Of the remaining two, one felt coerced; the other wanted to get out of an undesirable shift.

### **D.A.R.E. Activities**

The officers were asked about the D.A.R.E. training and their D.A.R.E. work for the years 1995 through 1998. During that time the number of schools the officers were assigned to on the average rose from 2.2 to 4.9 per semester. They taught 3.1 classes per week in 1995, which rose to 13.7 classes per week in 1998.

Table 1 below lists typical activities required of the D.A.R.E. officers outside of teaching the curriculum and the average number of times per month in which this group of officers engaged in them.

Activity	Frequency Times/mo.
Greeting the students as they arrive and depart school	11
Participating in other subject classes as a guest	5.6
Participating in school yard activities	11.5
Eating lunch with students or visiting with them in the cafeteria	11
Visiting or participating in physical education class	3.7
Participating in after school or special school activities such as dances, fairs, assemblies, field trips, sports activities	3.5

**Table 1: D.A.R.E. Officer Activities**

#### **D.A.R.E. Officer Assessment of D.A.R.E. Training**

The goal of this section of the survey was to measure the officers' perception of training effectiveness around the skill areas outlined in the Rhode Island D.A.R.E. reports and manuals. The responding officers had between 1 and 9 years of teaching experience in the field upon which to base their responses. The average number of years in the field was typically 3 to 5 years.

First the officers were asked how well they were trained to carry out tasks related to carrying out teaching duties. They were asked to rate each of the four areas as "Poor," "Fair," "Good," and "Excellent" or "No Training" if they did not feel the issue was addressed.

The results are provided in the table below. More than 50% of the respondents responded "Good" or "Excellent" for both Core and Middle School training. Teaching, planning and preparing were the strongest training areas. Paperwork and checking homework were the weakest. The Core program evidenced significantly stronger training in correcting homework and other assignments. The numbers represent the answer receiving the highest proportion (mode) of responses. The stronger curriculum for each element is highlighted in bold print.

	Core	Middle
Planning and preparing for classes	<b>Excellent</b> (87%)	Excellent (77%)
Teaching the curriculum	Excellent (67%)	<b>Excellent</b> (70%)
Filling out necessary paperwork	<b>Good</b> (40%)	Excellent (38%)

Checking homework and other assignments	<b>Good</b> (67%)	Good (46%)
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**Table 2: Officer Assessment of D.A.R.E. Training Related to Teaching Duties**

Respondents were then read a list of different personal and social skill areas affecting young people in which D.A.R.E. officers are trained to be effective. Using the same scale, officers were asked to rate how well they were trained for their primary and secondary curriculum areas. The results are summarized in the series of tables below. The numbers represent the answer receiving the highest proportion (mode) of responses.

	<b>Core</b>	<b>Middle</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing self-esteem</li> </ul>	<b>72%</b>	54%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching young people how to recognize and resist many pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and drugs</li> </ul>	<b>72%</b>	69%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching and developing decision-making skills</li> </ul>	67%	<b>76%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing awareness of positive alternative activities to drug abuse and other destructive behaviors</li> </ul>	<b>61%</b>	<b>61%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching and developing conflict resolution skills</li> </ul>	50%	N/A*

- see "Good" ratings below

**Table 3: Training Effectiveness in Personal and Social Skill Areas Receiving Highest Proportion of "Excellent" ratings -- Core and Middle/Junior High School**

	<b>Core</b>	<b>Middle</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching and developing communication skills</li> </ul>	<b>61%</b>	<b>61%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing empathy</li> </ul>	61%	<b>69%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching and developing a sense of purpose and independence</li> </ul>	<b>55%</b>	46%

• Teaching and developing social competence	50%	<b>54%</b>
• Recognizing and resisting influences to engage in violent behavior	<b>50%</b>	46%
• Teaching and developing conflict resolution skills	N/A*	46%

\*see Fair/Good Ratings below

**Table 4: Training Effectiveness in Personal and Social Skill Areas Receiving Highest Proportion of "Good" Ratings -- Core and Middle/Junior High School**

	<u>Core</u>	<u>Middle</u>
• Bonding to school	44%	<b>46%</b>
• Bonding to family	<b>39%</b>	N/A
• Bonding to community	33%	N/A
• Developing empathy	N/A*	31%

\*See "Good" rating above

**Table 5: Training Effectiveness in Personal and Social Skill Areas Receiving Highest Proportion of "Fair to Good" Ratings -- Core and Middle/Junior High School**

	<b>Middle</b>
Bonding to family	54%
Bonding to community	54%



**Table 6: Training Effectiveness in Personal and Social Skill Areas Receiving Highest Proportion of "Fair" Ratings -- Middle/Junior High School Only**

The table below summarizes the results for all of the personal and social skill areas

	Core Training	Middle School Training
Developing self-esteem	Excellent	Excellent
Teaching young people how to recognize and resist many pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and drugs	Excellent	Excellent
Teaching and developing decision-making skills	Excellent	Excellent
Increasing awareness of positive alternative activities to drug abuse and other destructive behaviors	Excellent	Excellent
Teaching and developing conflict resolution skills	Excellent	Good
Teaching and developing communication skills	Good	Good
Teaching and developing a sense of purpose and independence	Good	Good
Teaching and developing social competence	Good	Good
Recognizing and resisting influences to engage in violent behavior	Good	Good
Developing empathy	Good	Fair/Good
Bonding to school	Good	Fair/Good
Bonding to family	Good	Fair
Bonding to community	Fair/Good	Fair

**Table 7: Summary of Results for Personal and Social Skill Areas -- Core and Middle/Junior High School**

**Factors Contributing to Continuing D.A.R.E. Duties**

The officers most frequently (71%) described the relationship with children and families as the reason for staying involved with D.A.R.E.

*Kids come up to you with hugs and high fives. You see that you're helping them.*

*I love my job -- working with kids and the working conditions. There's a feeling of accomplishment involved with helping kids.*

*It's great. I have learned from the kids and they have learned from me. They don't want you to leave. At end of 17 weeks, kids have learned something. I am able to follow them over time and see the affect it has had on them.*

Other reasons included: enjoying teaching; it is part of the community police job and the officer recognizes the importance of prevention.

### **Factors Contributing to Leaving D.A.R.E.**

Of the 8 who were inactive 75% left because of promotion. Other reasons offered included a conflict between personal life and job requirements and job stress.

### **Best Elements of the Training:**

Officers felt the best elements of the training were the following:

1. Demonstrations/modeling 27.3%

*Not so much what was written in the books but the knowledge of the mentors was valuable. Learning from real life experiences. The things you can learn from others who have done it. People who presented at the program.*

2. Classroom management strategies 22.7%

*Classroom management was the best. It is not something I was trained in as a police officer. I would have had a tough time without the D.A.R.E. training.*

3. Practice teaching 22.7%

*Training was good. Middle School training brought kids in and asked them how they would like the program to be presented. That was really good because we found out what they wanted. The instructors and educators were really good. Both HS and Middle/Junior High School training were really good. We had to go to a large school and present in a health class. I was nervous but the kids helped a lot.*

Other elements included the mentors, the lesson planning and learning a kid's point of view.

### **Weakest Elements of the Training**

Officers were asked what the weakest elements of the training were and any recommendations they had for improvement. There was very little criticism of the training other than two complaints about poor facilities. The officers were highly complimentary and enthusiastic. However, they did have a criticism of the D.A.R.E. curriculum that was almost universal: there needs to be more flexibility in the approach:

*I would have liked more information from previous officers about specific techniques. They need to allow officers to be flexible with lesson plans. They don't like people to stray too far from what is established. We each teach in unique communities. D.A.R.E. America needs to recognize this.*

*Realistically, they have to provide more leeway to address local issues. More localized issues need to be brought into the curriculum. Not everyone has the same issues. It isn't about never having a sip of wine in your life. Some officers*

*think kids will be burned in hell. We need to learn how to deal with tendency of kids to try things without shaming them. What happens if a kid makes a mistake? There needs to be updating of material. Need to give officers leeway and more topics. Each district is different and the curriculum is too limited. Need flexibility.*

### **Impact of D.A.R.E. Training on the Officers**

When the officers were asked what impact the D.A.R.E. training had on them, their answers fell into three categories: 1) Personal growth and personal relationships improved; 2) gained better understanding of kids and the community; 3) greater enthusiasm for work.

*It was awesome! It teaches a lot about people – about how to interact with kids. You can use in your own life. Stress and peer pressure happen in adults lives too. I learned to apply what I learned to myself.*

*Besides my marriage and kids this was the greatest experience of my life. The greatest impact was on how I want to educate and treat my kids and prepare them for life.*

*It helped me with my desire to be close with my own kid, talk with her, and communicate with her. I want to be that influence on her.*

*Made me understand teachers. I have more respect for teachers. I also see what kids are up against and have a better understanding of what effect that has on them.*

*Opened my eyes to know that kids are dealing with the same issues that I have as an adult. Eye-opening.*

*It affected the way I feel about my job. I love my job and enjoy coming to work.*

The officers responded similarly when they were asked what impact being a D.A.R.E. officer had on their lives. Many of their comments described improved, deeper, more meaningful relationships with children, parents and families in their communities.

*It has changed how I look at people. I used to be judgmental of class and ethnic background. I don't do that anymore. I don't try to put someone in a different class. Through D.A.R.E. training, I have less problems now. I treat people the way I want to be treated.*

*I can't go anywhere in town without people knowing me. I could run for mayor. I've made a difference. They have made a difference to me. I am softer and gentler. It is good to see a messed up kid go to college. Its not the D.A.R.E. program, it's the guy who is teaching it. If your heart is into it, it works. I am definitely more of a people person -- more sensitive to the needs of families. Some kids just need more "hugs" (not that I would hug them) but more support than stern lectures. There is always a reason for the behavior of kids. It mellowed me out quite a bit. I am more tolerant of the kids on the street. When I was a rookie, I was suspicious of kids. They're just kids and I have a better understanding of them.*

*I love seeing kids. When I'm on the road they come over and stop. I have been paged by kids who need help – they reach out to you.*

The nature and quality of support for the D.A.R.E. officers' work was higher in schools than among peers. School support was described as mixed (22.7%) and very supportive (77.3%).

Peer support was described as not supportive (22.7%), mixed support (40.9%) and very supportive (36.4%). Some comments on peer support included:

*I have fantastic superiors – very supportive; lending guidance; are very experienced and helpful. There's a misconception among officers – "macho". I hear "kiddie cop" a lot but there are also open-minded officers. Some people don't understand the curriculum and my goal is to enlighten fellow workers as well – that we all have a common goal. I plan on having fellow cops come into the classroom*

*Guys will tease me. "You're a baby-sitter". Supervisors are incredible. Anything I need is okay. Some officers have to cover my beat area when I have to deal with D.A.R.E. so there is some resentment. But on a one-to-one basis, individual officers will come up to me and tell me that I'm doing a good job. I had very little support. Also had to do patrol duties. Nobody wants to do all that work.*

### **D.A.R.E. Impact on Children – D.A.R.E. Officer's Perceptions**

Finally, the officers were asked what they felt the impact of D.A.R.E. was. Eighteen officers responded to the question. The answers ranged from doubtful to hopeful to convinced there was a positive impact. Because the officers who responded took the time to be thoughtful and thorough in their responses to this question, we have quoted all of them below.

*Positive. I also think it comes down to the officer who teaches it. If a kid relates to the officer it will mean more to them. Officers who really don't want to be there shouldn't teach kids. I find myself defending D.A.R.E. because of what has been said in the media. You shouldn't have a program with officers who don't want to teach it.*

*A positive one as far as relationships between the youth and police--between kids in community and home. I don't know the impact on drug use. I know that it helps to have personal relationships between police, kids & families. It helped kids' self-esteem. I was also able to help kids who were abused.*

*Tremendous. We have reached so many different kids. The contact with officers is huge. Kids come up to patrolmen. Police Youth League is successful. Barriers are broken down.*

*Excellent. They did a study in the community and 80% of those juveniles arrested had never had the D.A.R.E. program.*

*The majority of the kids have a different sense of police work. They see that other kids have the same pressures and problems they do. If they see other kids have it and learned to resist, then they can learn to stick up for themselves. They learn from each other. Kids I taught 6 years ago who are now 17 years old, come up to me and say hello and let me know how they're doing.*

*Kids disclose parents using drugs and that is a difficult position to be in --- parents think we're trying to get information. I hope we're getting through to them – they are comfortable with us, which is a good thing.*

*I would say that that some kids just didn't get it. If you say one thing and their parents are doing another it just isn't going to work. In the worst schools, I would*

*say only 2 or 3 kids out of the class really got it. In the better schools, the majority of the class got it.*

*I thought they loved class; looked forward to class. I felt they were listening and were into it. I think it helped that I was bilingual and conducted bilingual classes (Spanish). When I started my new job, one of my former D.A.R.E. students helped us find a perp.*

*Greatest impact. We can measure wrong but we don't measure things we've got right. The intangibles are friendship and bonding between community, parents, teachers, kids. Kids are seeing cops in a positive way. In past 7 years, more kids come up to cruisers. We're not the enemy. Parents have major contact, and they don't fear us. The Captain gives us the power to make it work.*

*Very positive. I have a lot of kids that will tell me stuff in confidence. Garnered confidence and trust in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. They know they can come to me. I had abuse disclosed to me in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class while we were doing "good touch bad touch". And one night a "tough guy" type older kid paged me because he was being abused by his uncle.*

*Huge, huge impact. They have more self-esteem, confidence, and opened their eyes to correct information. They became aware of realities. I have had several kids disclose abuse situations.*

*I think it has been outstanding. I stop and see kids at their homes; talk to kids while on patrol. We don't have community policing so we rely on D.A.R.E. and PAL.*

*At the elementary level, the kids come back with essays and it seems to have a strong impact.*

*In Middle and High School some fall by the wayside. But all around it is good. There is the most impact on kids that need it the most. Kids that generally don't do as well as others tend to pay attention. Kids who are already good at school don't pay attention. The relationships have impact. A kid whose parents were heroin addicts came back and said I made all the difference in his life. He hasn't been in trouble.*

*The ability to develop a relationship with kids who don't have the opportunity to relate to adults. Kids volunteer and work in the department with me. Kids who just want to be around a positive situation.*

*Positive. Over 10 years kids have graduated and come back. Parents come back and tell us they're doing well. A small minority still doing drugs.*

*Good. Good influence. Helps to create a bond between them and us. There's always been a lot of animosity. Police in schools shows we're people too. We can still say hello to each other.*

*It's made some positive impact because of the relationships it creates with the officer. Kids on the street check to see if they know you from school.*

### **Parent and Teacher Interviews**

In addition to the D.A.R.E. Officers' interviews, 4 parents of children who had participated in the D.A.R.E. program and 3 teachers who participated in D.A.R.E. in their classrooms were interviewed.

The 4 parents interviewed came from different communities across the state.

They were identified through the evaluator's personal contacts in the community.

Of the 4 parents interviewed, 3 females and 1 male, all described their ethnicity as white. Three of the parents are very active community volunteers.

The children of all 4 parents participated in D.A.R.E. in 5th grade.

Parents were asked to comment on how well they believed the officers were trained in the 4 skill areas of planning and preparing for classes, teaching the curriculum, checking homework and other assignments, and filling out necessary paperwork, using the same scale, " Poor," "Fair," " Good," " Excellent," or "Don't Know." The results are shown in Table 8, below.

		Don't Know	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
a.	Teaching the curriculum				2	2
b.	Planning and preparing for classes				2	2
c.	Checking homework and other assignments	2			1	1
d.	Filling out necessary paperwork	2			1	1

**Table 8: Parent Responses to Four D.A.R.E. Skill Areas**

Parents also were asked to rate how well they believed the D.A.R.E. officers were trained in teaching the personal and social skill areas affecting young people. Table 9 shows the responses of the 4 parents.

		Don't Know	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
a.	Teaching and developing social competence				1	3
b.	Teaching and developing communication skills				1	3

c.	Developing self-esteem				2	2
d.	Developing empathy				2	2
e.	Teaching and developing decision-making skills				3	1
f.	Teaching and developing conflict resolution skills				3	1
g.	Teaching and developing a sense of independence and purpose				2	2
h.	Increasing awareness of positive alternative activities to drug abuse and other destructive behaviors				2	2
i.	Teaching young people how to recognize and resist many pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and drugs				1	3
j.	Recognizing and resisting Influences to engage in violent behavior				2	2
k.	Bonding to family				2	2
l.	Bonding to community			1	1	2
M	Bonding to school				2	2

**Table 9: Parents' Responses to Training in Personal and Social Skills**

All 4 parents who were interviewed praised the D.A.R.E. program. Two of the D.A.R.E. skill areas, teaching the curriculum and planning and preparing for classes were rated "Good," or "Excellent," by all 4 parents. The 2 other skill areas, checking homework and other assignments and filling out necessary paperwork, were rated "Good" or "Excellent" by 2 parents and "Don't Know" by 2 parents. All but 1 of the 13 personal and social skill areas also were rated "Good" or "Excellent." The one exception was bonding to community, which was given a "Fair" rating by 1 parent. Parents were very enthusiastic in their comments about the impact of the D.A.R.E. program on their children. Suggestions for improving the program included getting more parents involved and teaching D.A.R.E consistently in the schools, without skipping any years. One parent felt that D.A.R.E. should differentiate between social drinking and substance abuse. Their comments were as follows:

*Developed stronger ties between the school, home and community.*

*The officer demonstrated empathy himself, and thus affected her son.*

*Excellent, overall positive influence.*

*The program is still fresh in his mind.*

*He wrote wonderful essays.*

*Having the officer out there being seen and heard is good.*

*Knowing child could go to police if there is a problem is important.*

*Child gained an awareness of different situations.*

*Child learned how to respond to pressure from selling/using drugs.*

*Child gained awareness of what it (substance abuse) does to the body.*

*I have 3 children who have been through the D.A.R.E. program, and I know it works.*

**Parent suggestions included:**

*Have to differentiate between occasional drinking on the part of the parent and serious drinking*

*To be effective the parents have to be involved.*

*D.A.R.E is a good foundation.*

*Get parents more involved.*

*D.A.R.E. needs to be in the school system every year...don't skip a year.*

Three classroom teachers who participated in the D.A.R.E. program during the 3 years included in this study also were interviewed (1 also was a parent of a child who had participated in the D.A.R.E. program). Two of the teachers were from the same community; the third teacher was from another area of the state. All are experienced teachers, with a minimum of 12 years teaching experience.

Two of the teachers taught 5th grade (one is retired); one teaches 7th grade. The teachers also were asked to rate the D.A.R.E. officers' expertise in the 4 D.A.R.E. training skills and in the personal and social skills. The responses are indicated in Tables 10 and 11, below.

		Don't Know	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
a.	Teaching the curriculum					3
b.	Planning and preparing for classes				1	2
c.	Checking homework and other assignments				1	2
d.	Filling out necessary paperwork	1				2



**Table 10: Teachers' Responses to Training in Four D.A.R.E. Skill Areas**

		Don't Know	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
a.	Teaching and developing social competence					3
b.	Teaching and developing communication skills				1	2
c.	Developing self-esteem					3
d.	Developing empathy				3	
e.	Teaching and developing decision making skills				1	2
f.	Teaching and developing conflict resolution skills					3
g.	Teaching and developing a sense of purpose and independence				1	2
h.	Increasing awareness of positive alternative activities to drug abuse and other destructive behaviors					3
i.	Teaching young people how to recognize and resist may pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and drugs					3
j.	Recognizing and resisting influences to engage in violent behavior					3
k.	Bonding to family	1			2	
l.	Bonding to community				2	1
m.	Bonding to school				1	2

**Table 11: Teachers' Responses to Training in Personal and Social Skills**

With the exception of 1 "Don't Know" for filling out necessary paperwork, teachers rated the 4 D.A.R.E. skill areas "Good" or "Excellent." With the exception of 1 "Don't Know" for bonding to family, teachers also rated the personal and social skills "Good" or "Excellent."

The teachers' comments on the impact of the D.A.R.E. program on students were as follows:

*Excellent impact then and the impact is still continuing on.*

*Having officers in the school works very well.*

*Teaches the students a healthy respect for authority.*

*Student might go to talk to an officer that they know...even if they save one youth.*

*Excellent impact.*

*Look forward to continuing the involvement.*

**Training Report Tables and Program Output Table**

The **Training Report Tables** include data on trainees specific to each of the three years.

Officer's Town or City	Train. Site	Rank	Skills Learned	# Schools Served - # Children Served	Grades Served	Cost of Training	Current Status in D.A.R.E.	Reason for Leaving
Cumberland	VA	Of	C	3-600	5-6	1284.00	A	
Foster	MA	Sgt.	JH	1-230	7-8	434.00	A	
New Shoreham	MA	Sgt.	C	1-54	5-6	1284.00	A	
Newport	Ohio	Of	SH	1- 300	10	878.00	A	
Pawtucket	MA	Of	JH	1-300	7-8	434.00	I	T
Portsmouth	Ohio	Of	SH	1-150	9-12	752.84	I	T/P
Scituate	VA	Of	C	3-182	5-6	1284.00	I	T

Tiverton	Ohio	Of	SH	1-200	9-12	872.84	I	R
W. Warwick.	VA	Sgt.	JH	1-350	7-8	610.19	A	
W. Warwick	VA	Of	C	3-210	5-6	1284.00	A	
W. Warwick	VA	Of	C	3-210	5-6	1284.00	I	P

**Table 12: Training Report Table: 1995-1996**

Officer's Town or City	Train Site	Rank	Skills Learned	# Schools Served - # Children Served	Grades Served	Cost of Training	Current Status in D.A.R.E.	Reason for Leaving
Barrington	VA	Of	JH	1-150	7-8	434.00	I	O
Burrillville	VA	Of	JH	1-150	7-8	434.00	A	
Central Falls	VA	Of	JH	2-250	7-8	434.00	A	
Coventry	ME	Of	C	3.5-280	5-6	1284.00	A	
Coventry	ME	Of	C	3.5-280	5-6	1284.00	A	
Cranston	VA	Of	C	11-550	5-6	1284.00	A	
Cranston	VT	Of	C	11-550	5-6	1284.00	A	
	VA		JH	4-858	7-8	434.00		
Cranston	VA	Of	P	0	N/A	434.00	A	
Cranston	VA	Of	P	0	N/A	434.00	A	
East Greenwich	VA	Of	C	1-400	5-6	1284.00	I	T

East Providence	VT	Of	C	7-150	5-6	1284.00	A	
East Providence	VT	Of	C	7-150	5-6	1284.00	A	
Foster	VA	Sgt.	SH	1-210	7-8	434.00	A	
Foster	VA	Of	P	0	N/A	434.00	I	T
Johnston	VA	Of	C	1-915	5-6	1284.00	I	T
Johnston	VT	Of	C	1-915	5-6	1284.00	I	T
Narragansett	ME	Of	C	1-165	5-6	1284.00	A	
	VA		JH	1-150	7-8	434.00		
Narragansett	VA	Of	JH	1-150	7-8	434.00	I	R
Newport	VT	Of	C	1-500	5-6	1284.00	A	
North Kingstown	VA	Of	JH	2-120	7-8	434.00	A	
	VA		P	0	N/A	434.00		
North Kingstown	VA	Of	P	0	N/A	434.00	A	
Pawtucket	VA	Of	C	9-800	5-6	1284.00	I	T
Pawtucket	VA	Of	JH	9-1200	7-8	434.00	I	T
Pawtucket	WV	Of	C	9-800	5-6	1284.00	I	T
Portsmouth	VA	Of	SH	1-150	7-8	434.00	A	
Providence	VT	Of	C	5.5 - 600	5-6	1284.00	I	T
Providence	VT	Of	C	5.5 600	5-6	1284.00	I	T
Smithfield	VA	Of	JH	2-260	7-8	434.00	I	R

Warren	VA	Of	JH	1-80	7-8	434.00	A	
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**Table 13: Training Report Table: 1996-1997**

Officer's Town or City	Train. Site	Rank	Skills Learned	# Schools Served - # Children Served	Grades Served	Cost of Training	Current Status in D.A.R.E.	Reason for Leaving
Barrington	CT	Of	C	2-286	5-6	1284.00	A	
East Greenwich	ME	Of	JH	1-200	7-8	434.00	I	T
East Greenwich	NJ	Of	C	1-216	5-6	1284.00	A	
East Providence	NJ	Of	JH	1-150	7-8	434.00	A	
East Providence	NJ	Of	JH	1-150	7-8	434.00	I	T
East Providence	NJ	Of	JH	1-150	7-8	434.00	A	
East Providence	VT	Of	C	7-150	5-6	1284.00	A	
	NJ		JH	14-300	7-8	434.00		
Johnston	VT	Of	C	1-1830	5-6	1284.00	I	T
Lincoln	CT	Det.	P	0	N/A	434.00	I	T
New Shoreham	NJ	Sgt.	JH	1-40	7-8	434.00	A	
Newport	CT	Of	P	0	N/A	434.00	A	
Newport	VT	Of	C	8-450	5-6	1284.00	A	
	CT		JH	1-250	7-8	434.00		
North Providence	VT	Of	C	7-400	5-6	1284.00	A	

North Providence	VT	Of	C	7-400	5-6	1284.00	A	
North Smithfield	ME	Of	JH	1-150	7-8	434.00	A	
North Smithfield	VT	Of	C	1-125	5-6	1284.00	A	
Pawtucket	CT	Of	JH	1-300	7-8	434.00	I	T
Pawtucket	ME	Of	JH	1-300	7-8	434.00	I	T
Portsmouth	ME	Of	JH	1-300	7-8	434.00	A	
Portsmouth	ME	Of	JH	1-300	7-8	434.00	I	T/P
Providence	CT	Of	C	11-1200	5-6	1284.00	A	
Scituate	ME	Of	JH	1-100	7-8	434.00	A	
Smithfield	VT	Of	C	5-250	5-6	1284.00	A	
Warwick	VT	Of	C	25-1200	5-6	1284.00	A	
West Warwick	CT	Of	JH	1-350	7-8	434.00	I	T
West Warwick	WV	Of	C	6—210	5-6	1284.00	A	
West Warwick	WV	Of	C	6-210	5-6	1284.00	A	

**Table 14: Training Report Table: 1997-1998**

**In 1995-1996, 11 officers, from 9 different cities or towns were trained.** Three trainees were sergeants; the remaining 8 were officers. The D.A.R.E. trainees received their training in MA, VA, and Ohio. Five were trained in the Core curriculum, 3 in the Middle/Junior High curriculum, and 3 in the Senior High curriculum. They served from 1 to 3 schools each and the number of students served ranged from 54 (New Shoreham) to 600 (Cumberland). Nineteen schools and 2786 students were served in this year. Five of the officers trained currently are inactive. Reasons for leaving the program include: promotion (1), transfer (2), and retirement (1) and transfer/promotion (1).

**In 1996-1997, 29 officers from 15 different cities and towns were trained.** Twenty-eight trainees were police officers and 1 was a police sergeant. Trainings were conducted in VT, VA, WV, and ME. Thirteen trainees were trained only in the Core curriculum, 7 were trained only in the

Middle/Junior High curriculum, 1 was trained in both the Middle/Junior High and Parenting curriculum, 2 were trained in both the Core and Middle/Junior High curriculum, 2 were trained in the Senior High curriculum, and 4 were trained only in the Parenting curriculum. The number of schools served following training ranged from 1 to 9 (officers attending the parenting curriculum were not assigned to specific classrooms), and the number of students served ranged from 80 (Warren) to 1200 (Pawtucket). Twelve of the 29 officers trained currently are inactive. Reasons for leaving include retirement (2), transfer (9), and other (1).

**In 1997-1998, 27 officers from 16 cities and towns areas were trained.** One trainee was a sergeant, 1 a detective, and all the others had the rank of police officer. Trainings were conducted in VT, NJ, CT, WV, and ME. Eleven trainees were trained in the Core curriculum, 12 in the Middle/Junior High curriculum, 2 in both the Core and Middle/Junior High curriculum, and 2 in the Parenting curriculum. The number of schools served ranged from 1 to 25, and the number of children served ranged from 40 (New Shoreham) to 1830 (Johnston). Eight of the 27 officers trained are inactive. Seven of the inactive officers were transferred; 1 was transferred and promoted.

The Training Report Tables illustrate that the variability in the costs of the trainings is more a function of the curriculum that is being taught than of the site of the training. For the most part, cost for the Core (\$1284.00), Middle/Junior High (\$434.00) and Parent (\$434.00) trainings remain constant. However, some variability was demonstrated. In 1995-1996 the cost of a Senior High training in Ohio ranged from \$752.84 to \$878.00. In 1996-1997 the cost of this training dropped to \$434.00 in VA. In 1995-1996 the cost of a Middle/Junior High training was \$610.19 in VA compared to \$434.00 in MA.

One of the more salient issues demonstrated in the Training Report Tables is the variability in the number of schools and children served after the officers have received the D.A.R.E. training. For example, in 1997-1998, one officer served 1830 students in the Core curriculum, while another officer from a different school district only served 125 students. The training costs for both officers were the same...\$1284.00. Similar variability can be seen in the other 2 years. The size of the school district accounts for some of this discrepancy. In 1995-1996 and 1997-1998, for example, New Shoreham, the smallest school district, served the fewest number of children in the D.A.R.E. program (54 & 40 respectively).

Year	# Officers Trained	Geographic Breakdown	#	# Students Served	Frequency of	Frequency of	# Active officers (%)
		By County and by # of officers)	Schools Served		Grades Served	Skills Learned	# Inactive Officers (%)
1995-6	11	27.3 % Kent (3)	19	2,786	45.5 % grades 5-6	45.5 % Core	6 active (54.5%)
		27.3 % Newport (3)			27.3 % grades 7-8	27.3 % Mid/JR	5 inactive (45.5%)
		36.4 % Providence (4)			27.3 % grades	27.3 % HS	
		9.1 % Washington (1)			9-12		
1996-7	29	10.3 % Kent (3)	103	11,383	51.7 % grades 5-6	51.7 % Core	17 active (58.6%)
		3.4 % Newport (1)			34.5% grades 7-8	27.6 % Mid/JR	12 inactive (41.4%)
		62.1 % Providence (18)			13.8 % n/a	6.9 % HS	
						13.8 % Parent.	

		13.8 % Washington(4) 10.3 % Bristol (3)					
<b>1997-8</b>	27	25.9 % Kent(7) 14.8 % Newport(4) 51.9 % Providence(14) 3.7 % Washington(1) 3.7 % Bristol (1)	114	9,967	48.1 % grades 5-6 44.4 % grades 7-8 7.4 % n/a	48.1 % Core 44.4 % Mid/JR 7.4 % Parent.	19 active (70.4%) 8 inactive (29.6%)

**Table 15: Program Output Table: 1995-1998**

The Program Output Table includes a comparative analysis of data from the three training years, including number of officers trained, geographic breakdown, number of schools served, number of students served, frequency of grades served, frequency of skills learned, and number of active /inactive officers.

The table demonstrates growth in the geographic areas that participated (4 counties in 1995-1996 and 5 counties in 1996-1997 & 1997-1998), and in the number of schools served (19 in 1995-1996, 103 in 1996-1997, and 114 in 1997-1998).

The number of officers trained increased from 11 to 29 from 1995-1996 to 1996-1997 and remained relatively constant for 1997-1998 (27). The number of students served increased significantly from 1995-1996 to 1996-1997 (2786 in 1995-6, 11,383 in 1996-1997 but decreased somewhat in 1997-1998 (9967). Overall, training in the Core curriculum was the most frequent skill learned over the three-year time period. Officers were trained in the Core curriculum and Middle/Junior High curriculum all 3 years. Training in the Senior High curriculum occurred in 1995-1996 & 1996-1997 and in the Parent curriculum in 1996 -1997 & 1997-1998. The percent of officers who became inactive after participating in the D.A.R.E. training fluctuated between 29.6% and 45.5% over the 3 years (averaging 38.8%; the highest percentage of active officers occurred in 1997-1998 (70%).

### **Summary:**

This evaluation focused on the training and duties of police officers trained from 1995-1998. The three research questions were addressed through structured interviews with 22 D.A.R.E. officers and an analysis of training data reported in two tables. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 4 parents who had children in the D.A.R.E. program and 3 teachers who participated in the D.A.R.E. program in their classrooms.

Interviews conducted with officers, parents and teachers involved with the D.A.R.E training program demonstrate the potential strength and impact of this training. The majority of officers who were interviewed expressed strong endorsement for the training program, citing both the positive effect it had on them personally and professionally and the significant impact it has had on the students they taught.

The officers' responses fell into three major areas: 1) Personal growth and personal relationships improved; 2) The officers gained better understanding of kids and the community; and 3) Officers felt greater enthusiasm for work. Intangibles such as building self-esteem, developing relationships with police officers, confidence building, and ability to disclose to a trusted police



officer were cited as positive outgrowths of the D.A.R.E. program. One officer, who conducted a bilingual (Spanish) class, felt that this enhanced the classes for students.

Seventy-one percent (71%) of the officers interviewed indicated that the personal relationships established with the youth and their families underlie their motivation for remaining involved in the D.A.R.E. program. Officers reported mixed support for the training program from schools, their community and from their peers. One consistent theme that emerged from the interviews was the importance of developing a comprehensive approach to the D.A.R.E. program that includes schools, police and community members.

All of the three teachers and four parents interviewed enthusiastically supported the D.A.R.E. training program.

*Several Strengths of the D.A.R.E. training program were identified:*

- Planning and preparing for classes and teaching the curriculum, tasks related to officers' teaching duties, received "Excellent" ratings from the trainees in both the Core and Middle/Junior High curriculum.
- In the Core curriculum training for the personal and social skills, 12 out of the 13 areas received "Good" or "Excellent" ratings.
- In the Middle/Junior High curriculum for the personal and social skills, 9 out of the 13 areas received an "Excellent" or "Good" rating.
- Best elements of the training were identified as demonstrations/modeling (learning from real life experience), learning classroom management strategies, and practice teaching
- Learning the kids' point of view of youth was identified as a positive feature of the training.
- An intangible but important effect of the D.A.R.E. training program on the officers is their ability to establish personal relationships with students and the community. Youth have turned to D.A.R.E. officers as role models and mentors who can divert youth from risk-taking behaviors.

*Identified Weaknesses include:*

- Training in 4 of the personal and social skills, developing empathy, bonding to schools, bonding to family and bonding to community received ratings below "Good" or "Excellent" (see Table #7).
- Lack of flexibility was identified as a major weakness in the D.A.R.E. America curriculum. Officers felt the curriculum was too limited, needed to be updated, and needed the flexibility to address local issues and unique community needs.
- In the three years studied, over 90% of the respondents were Caucasian. It should be noted that local police departments recruit D.A.R.E. officers. We are unable to determine the cause of this preponderance of Caucasian trainee respondents in a very diverse state. We do not have racial or ethnic identity information on the trainees who did not respond to the phone survey and therefore cannot determine if the 90% Caucasian statistic is representative of RI D. A. R. E. officers or merely representative of the group

of respondents willing to be interviewed. It is an important issue that bears further investigation.

- There was considerable discrepancy in the trainees' productivity after training. For example, 3 officers trained in the high school or parent curricula had no opportunity to teach these curricula.

There also was great variability in the number of students that are served by any one trainee.

The Training Report Table and the Program Output Table included in this evaluation report demonstrate program growth over the 3-year time span. Participation in the D.A.R.E. training program expanded from 4 RI counties in 1995-1996 to all 5 of the state's counties in 1996-1997 and 1997-1998. It should be noted, however, that Providence County has subsequently withdrawn from the D.A.R.E. program. Most of the officers were trained in the Core and Middle/Junior curriculum for each of the 3 years that were studied. Officers also were trained in the Senior High curriculum in both 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 and in the Parent curriculum in both 1996-1997 and 1997-1998.

Variability was demonstrated in the number of schools and students served per trained officer and also in the number of officers who became inactive after training.

### **Recommendations**

- Local police departments should be encouraged and supported in working closely with schools and the community in order to maximize the training experience of D.A.R.E. officers. A coordinated commitment to the program from the schools, police departments and communities that participate in D.A.R.E would help meet the expressed need for program consistency and provide D.A.R.E. officers with the opportunity to fully utilize the training they received.
- Commitment from schools to include D.A.R.E classes should be procured prior to investing in the training of an officer. This would minimize the problem of a trained officer not having the opportunity to use his/her newly acquired skills.
- Standards for minimum/maximum numbers of classes and/or students taught relative to the size of the school district should be established to assure that trained officers have the opportunity to maximize their training experience.
- Strategies for recruiting trainees should address the issue of cultural diversity to meet the needs of Rhode Island's many ethnic groups.
- Strategies for recruiting trainees should recognize the central role relationships play at the heart of a successful D.A.R.E. effort. Only those officers interested in and committed to building relationships with children, families, schools and the community should be recruited for D.A.R.E officer positions.
- By instituting more comprehensive and ongoing monitoring of D.A.R.E officers statewide, D.A.R.E. Rhode Island and the GJC would be able to learn more about the underlying dynamics of officer stress and turnover. For example, the interview protocols from this study could be revised and designed as paper & pencil surveys for distribution to active officers on a yearly basis that would systematically document D.A.R.E. officer activities, attitudes and turnover. Mandatory exit surveys and /or interviews at the time of D.A.R.E Officers relinquish their duties would also contribute to an understanding of the officers' experiences and decision-making.

- Lack of trainee diversity should be further investigated. As local police departments recruit D.A.R.E. officers, this may represent a lack of diversity in the various community police forces and therefore is out of control of the D.A.R.E. recruitment process. If, however, there is a preponderance of Caucasian trainees recruited from a more diverse work force, then strategies for recruiting trainees should address the issue of cultural diversity to meet the needs of Rhode island's many ethnic groups.
- Concerns about the lack of flexibility in the D.A.R.E. American curriculum should be shared and pursued with the national organization by the leadership of D.A.R.E. Rhode Island.